



AMERICAN
SPEECH-LANGUAGE-
HEARING
ASSOCIATION

Schools Survey Report:
SLP Workforce and Work Conditions Trends
2000–2014

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Introduction

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conducted the 2014 Schools Survey to gather information about professional issues related to school-based services. Results from this survey are presented in a series of reports, including this report on speech-language pathologist (SLP) workforce and work conditions trends.

Findings from the 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012 ASHA Schools Surveys are also included in this report for comparative purposes. Questions differ among surveys, so data on all topics are not available for all survey years.

Survey Report Highlights

- From 2004 to 2014, the majority (77%–89%) of survey respondents worked full-time; 8%–18% worked part-time. The remainder were on leave of absence, not employed, or retired.
- From 2004 to 2014, the majority (89%–94%) of SLPs were salaried employees; 4%–11% were contract employees.
- In 2014, fewer than half (48%) of SLPs reported that job openings were more numerous than job seekers in their type of school setting and geographic area, about the same as in 2012 but down substantially from previous years.
- From 2004 to 2014, SLPs from the western region of the United States (mountain and pacific states) were more likely than those from the other regions of the country to report that job openings were more numerous than job seekers.
- From 2010 to 2014, SLPs from city/urban areas and rural areas were more likely than those in suburban areas to report that job openings exceeded job seekers.
- SLPs who reported there was a shortage of clinical service providers in their type of school setting and geographic area were asked to indicate the impact of the shortage. From 2004 to 2014, most (77%–83%) indicated “increased caseload or workload.” About half (48%–57%) indicated “decreased quality of service.”
- From 2000 to 2014, most SLPs reported that “high amount of paperwork” was their top professional challenge (80%–88%), followed by “high caseload or workload size” (55%–61%).
- In 2014, most (73%) SLPs indicated that, overall, ASHA was doing a “good” or “excellent” job in serving its school-based members, up steadily from 57% in 2008, 60% in 2010, and 69% in 2012.
- From 2012–2014, most SLPs indicated that ASHA was doing a “good” or “excellent” job in serving school-based members with advocacy (54%–55%), continuing education (76%–78%), and online resources (77%–82%).

Employment

Employment Status

From 2004 to 2014, most (77%–89%) survey respondents worked full-time; 8%–18% worked part-time. The remainder were on leave of absence, not employed, or retired (see Table 1).

Table 1. *Employment status of ASHA Schools Survey SLP respondents by year*

Employment Status	Percentage (%)					
	2004 ^a	2006 ^b	2008 ^c	2010 ^d	2012 ^e	2014 ^f
Employed full-time	89	78	77	80	79	79
Employed part-time	8	17	18	17	17	17
On leave of absence	2	2	1	1	1	1
Not employed but actively seeking employment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not employed and not seeking employment	0	3	1	1	1	1
Retired	1	0	2	1	2	2

Note. From 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys.

^a*n* = 2,676; ^b*n* = 2,557; ^c*n* = 2,553; ^d*n* = 2,485; ^e*n* = 2,534; ^f*n* ≥ 1,690.

Principal Employment Situation

From 2004 to 2014, most (89%–94%) SLPs were salaried employees; a small percentage (4%–11%) were contract employees (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Principal employment situation of ASHA Schools Survey SLP respondents by year*

Principal employment situation	Percentage (%)					
	2004 ^a	2006 ^b	2008 ^c	2010 ^d	2012 ^e	2014 ^f
Salaried employee, full-time or part-time	94	91	92	89	89	90
Contract employee (e.g., per diem or temporary)	4	6	7	9	11	10
Owner (e.g., office-based or contract-based private practice)	2	2	1	2	—	—
Other	0	1	—	—	—	—

Note. From 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys. Dash indicates that item was not included in the survey.

^a*n* = 2,584; ^b*n* = 2,421; ^c*n* = 2,410; ^d*n* = 2,390; ^e*n* = 2,403; ^f*n* = 1,666.

Job Market

In recent years, a survey item has been included on major ASHA data collection initiatives to assess the job market for SLPs. The question and response categories were patterned after definitions used by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. In 2014, overall, fewer than half (48%) of school-based clinical service providers reported that job openings were more numerous than job seekers in their type of school and geographic area, about the same as in 2012 but down substantially from previous years (see Table 3).

Table 3. Current job market for SLP clinical service providers by year

	Percentage (%)					
	2004 ^a	2006 ^b	2008 ^c	2010 ^d	2012 ^e	2014 ^f
Job openings more numerous than job seekers	62	68	72	55	47	48
Job openings in balance with job seekers	28	24	20	30	32	28
Job openings fewer than job seekers	10	8	8	15	20	24

Note. From 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys.

^a*n* = 2,658; ^b*n* = 2,538; ^c*n* = 2,525; ^d*n* = 2,458; ^e*n* = 2,508; ^f1,684.

Job Market by Geographic Region

From 2004 to 2014, across all school settings, SLPs from the western region of the United States (mountain and pacific states) were mostly likely to report that job openings exceeded job seekers. Percentages for “job openings more numerous than job seekers” ranged from 60% to 90% in these states. (These data are not presented in any table.)

Job Market by Type of Community

From 2010 to 2014, across all school settings, SLPs from city/urban areas (52%–59%) and rural areas (54%–57%) were more likely to report that job openings exceeded job seekers than those in suburban areas (42%–52%). (These data are not presented in any table.)



Impact of Shortage of Clinical Service Providers

SLPs who reported there was a shortage of clinical service providers in their type of school setting and geographic area were asked to indicate the effect of the shortage. From 2004 to 2014, the majority (77%–83%) indicated “increased caseload or workload” (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Impact of shortage of school-based clinical service providers by year*

Impact	Percentage (%)					
	2004 ^a	2006 ^b	2008 ^c	2010 ^d	2012 ^e	2014 ^f
Decrease in job satisfaction	—	—	—	48	48	50
Decreased opportunities for appropriate service delivery	—	—	—	52	55	52
Decreased quality of service	53	57	55	48	52	48
Increased caseload or workload	83	79	79	81	77	79
Increased use of contracted service providers	—	—	—	—	—	50
Increased use of support personnel (e.g., assistants or aides)	—	—	—	—	—	21
Increased use of noncertified SLPs or audiologists	—	—	—	—	—	9
Increased use of telepractice services	—	—	—	1	4	3
Less opportunity for networking and collaborating	53	39	38	37	37	38
There is no impact.	—	—	2	2	3	3

Note. From 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey.

^a*n* = 1,604; ^b*n* = 1,644; ^c*n* = 1,815; ^d*n* = 1,360; ^e*n* = 1,190; ^f*n* = 806.

Greatest Professional Challenges

From 2000 to 2014, the majority of SLPs reported that “high amount of paperwork” and “high caseload or workload size” were their greatest professional challenges (see Table 5).

Table 5. *Greatest professional challenges of school-based SLPs by year*

Challenge	Percentage (%)						
	2000 ^a	2004 ^b	2006 ^c	2008 ^d	2010 ^e	2012 ^f	2014 ^g
Budget	—	—	—	—	—	—	31
High amount of paperwork	88	82	80	80	81	81	80
High caseload or workload size	60	61	58	56	60	61	55
Implementing pre-referral or multi-tiered system of support, i.e., response to intervention (RTI) ^h	—	—	—	—	32	34	20
Inadequate work space and facilities	35	34	29	28	25	25	21
Incorporating optimal service delivery models	—	—	—	—	—	—	36
Lack of materials, assessment tools, and technology ⁱ	18	20	16	16	18	23	20
Lack of others’ understanding of my role	41	40	34	34	37	38	38
Lack of parental involvement and support	41	32	25	24	27	28	28
Lack of support from the administration	25	23	21	22	21	21	21
Lack of time for collaboration	—	—	—	—	—	—	51
Lack of time for planning	—	—	—	—	—	—	54
Lack of training for English language learners (ELLs), technology, low-incidence disorders, or curriculum-based instruction ^j	—	—	—	27	25	28	17
Low salary	37	37	32	33	27	31	29
Out-of-pocket professional expenses	—	—	—	—	34	39	30
Travel/distance between schools	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
Value-added assessments	—	—	—	—	—	4	8
Working with Common Core State Standards (e.g., integrating goals)	—	—	—	—	—	—	24

Note. From 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey.

^a*n* = 2,067; ^b*n* = 2,602; ^c*n* = 2,561; ^d*n* = 2,556; ^e*n* = 2,492; ^f*n* = 2,538; ^g*n* = 1,786; ^h2010–2012, this item was “Implementing RTI.” ⁱ2000–2010, this item was “Lack of materials and assessment tools.” ^jIn 2008, this item was “Lack of training for ELLs, hearing-related technology, augmentative and alternative (AAC) technology, or low incidence disorders.” In 2010 and 2012, it was “Lack of training for ELLs, hearing-related technology, AAC technology, low-incidence disorders, or curriculum-based instruction.”

Member Satisfaction Ratings

From 2008 to 2014, most (57%–73%) SLPs indicated that the Association was doing a “good” or “excellent” job in serving its school-based members overall (see Table 6). From 2012 to 2014, most indicated that ASHA was doing a “good” or “excellent” job with advocacy (54%–55%), continuing education (76%–78%), and online resources (77%–82%). Nearly half (41%) indicated that ASHA was doing a “good” or “excellent” job with professional consultation.

Table 6. Ratings for what kind of job ASHA is doing in serving its school-based members overall, with advocacy, continuing education, online resources, and professional consultation

	Percentage (%)			
	Overall			
	2008 ^a	2010 ^b	2012 ^c	2014 ^d
Poor	6	5	2	3
Fair	37	35	21	15
Good	51	55	59	61
Excellent	6	5	10	12
Don't know, Not applicable	—	—	8	10
	With Advocacy			
Poor	—	—	5	5
Fair	—	—	25	22
Good	—	—	44	44
Excellent	—	—	10	11
Don't know, Not applicable	—	—	16	18
	With Continuing Education			
Poor	—	—	2	2
Fair	—	—	17	14
Good	—	—	53	51
Excellent	—	—	23	27
Don't know, Not applicable	—	—	6	6
	With Online Resources			
Poor	—	—	1	1
Fair	—	—	15	11
Good	—	—	53	54
Excellent	—	—	24	28
Don't know, Not applicable	—	—	8	6
	With Professional Consultation			
Poor	—	—	3	2
Fair	—	—	19	14
Good	—	—	34	34
Excellent	—	—	7	7
Don't know, Not applicable	—	—	37	43

Note. From 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 ASHA Schools Surveys. Dash indicates that item was not included in survey.

^a*n* = 2,445; ^b*n* = 2,417; ^c*n* = ≥ 2,474; ^d*n* = ≥ 1,699.

Survey Methodology and Response Rates

The survey was mailed in February 2014 to a random sample of 4,000 ASHA-certified SLPs and 500 ASHA-certified audiologists employed in school settings in the United States. Second and third mailings followed, at approximately 3- or 4-week intervals, to individuals who had not responded to earlier mailings.

Of the total sample, 14 had bad mailing addresses, 59 had retired, and 145 were ineligible for other reasons, which left 4,282 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 1,969, which represents a 46.0% response rate.

Of the original 4,000 SLPs in the sample, 11 had bad mailing addresses, 53 had retired, and 135 were ineligible for other reasons, which left 3,801 possible respondents. The actual number of respondents was 1,786, which represents a 47.0% response rate. The results presented in this report are based on responses from those 1,786 individuals.

Past ASHA Schools Survey response rates were:

- 2000: 43.0%
- 2004: 69.7%
- 2006: 64.9%
- 2008: 64.0%
- 2010: 64.8% (overall); 65.5% (among SLPs)
- 2012: 63.6% (overall); 64.7% (among SLPs)

Suggested Citation

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2014). *Schools Survey report: Workforce and work conditions trends, 2000–2014*. Available from www.asha.org.

Additional Information

Companion reports are available on the ASHA website at www.asha.org/research/memberdata/schoolssurvey/.

Questions?

For additional information regarding this report or school services generally, please contact Deborah Dixon, director, School Services, at ddixon@asha.org or 800-498-2071, ext. 5690. To learn more about how the Association is working on behalf of school-based ASHA-certified members, visit www.asha.org/slp/schools/.

Acknowledgment

Without the generous cooperation of the members who participate in our surveys, ASHA could not fulfill its mission to provide vital information about the professions and discipline to the Association membership and public. Thank you!